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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION SAO PAULO: Cuba-Castro, Iran, and Mercosul  
04-18-2009 and 04-19-2009

Media Reaction - Western Hemisphere: Summit of Americas; Venezuela,  
Cuba, governance, easing of restrictions; South and Central Asia:  
Iran; Sao Paulo

Saturday, April 18

Title- Castro answers Obama

Main editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (4-18) states:  
"....For the first time in decades, the battered old expression  
["times have changed"] have now sounded to Latin American ears like  
a new password [opening the door] to an effective partnership in the  
Hemisphere. The problem is the irregularity of expectations that  
involve the.....end of the economic embargo to Cuba.....Even so, one  
cannot deny that a wheel was put in motion for what will necessarily  
be a longer route - and subject to accidents - than what  
participants of the 5th Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain  
would like it to be."

Title-Brazil and Iran, dangerous relations

Op-Ed in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (4-18) by Unicamp  
Professor Roberto Romano states: "Brazil is preparing itself to host  
Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad....in May....We walk through a  
route opposed to that of Iran....What can we learn from this regime?  
Brazil and other emerging democratic countries do not have reasons  
to get closer to authoritarian governments like Iran....Brazil  
should get closer to responsible leaders in the Middle East, never  
demagogue tyrants."

Title- Cuba and Ipanema

Op-Ed in liberal Folha de S. Paulo (4-18) by columnist Clovis Rossi  
notes: "It is evident that a countdown to the end of the U.S.  
Embargo to Cuba has started...or by extension to the reintegration  
of the island to the Inter-American system, from which it has been  
suspended for 50 years.....There is no reason for the two  
countries....not to resume relations, once they were interrupted due  
to a phenomena, the Cold War, which ended two decades ago."

Sunday, April 19

Title- A meeting in the Caribbean

Op-Ed in liberal Folha de S. Paulo (4-18) by columnist Clovis Rossi  
says: "I don't know, and nobody does, if the future that Obama  
promises will really be one of prosperity for all. But what I do  
know is that the capitalism won the ideological battle, whether you  
like the result or not. I also know that now what it is missing is  
to demonstrate whether [capitalism] is capable of winning the other  
and more important war, the one to be able to improve the national  
gross happiness index, which is more important than that of the

Gross Domestic Product, which it knows, almost always, how to make it grow."

Title- Mercosul, Venezuela and the democratic clause

Op-Ed in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (4-18) by former Foreign Minister Celso Lafer states: "[Brazil's] Senate is evaluating Venezuela's Admission to Mercosul Protocols....The entrance of Hugo Chavez's Venezuela in the trade bloc does not fit because it will represent not only the presence of a normal conflict of interests in the integration process, but a significant conflict of conception about the purposes of the integration....This type of conflict will add new tensions to Mercosul, which has already been compromised by significant conflicts of interests between its current members.....To keep good economic and political cooperation with a neighbor like Venezuela is in Brazil's interest....Noneheless, incorporate, at this moment, Chavez' Venezuela into Mercosul is to contribute and condemn a innovative integration project to irrelevance and dissolution."

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